

DETERMINANTS OF CHOICE OF STUDIES: TRADITION VERSUS VOCATION

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Abstract

In recent years university courses and specializations have grown. Becoming a wide range of options for the student who must choose at an early age his professional future. Many times the student does not clear a choice of studies. Many studies have risen what are the factors of choice of studies, such as career opportunities, vocation, educational counselor, family tradition, etc. Data were obtained from a study of University of Granada about university career and implications. This data were collected during 2004-2010 and the survey was conducted by phone and by interview for more than 10.000 students. In this paper the authors present a literature review of key decision factors of the degree and studied more deeply the involvement of parents in this election. We also studied the factor of family tradition in the studies. In the results we can see that when the degree has been chosen by family tradition or recommendation parent student's final grade is lower than that of those students who elected by vocation or career opportunities.

Keywords: vocation, tradition, study choice, survey.

1 INTRODUCTION

Choosing a university degree is one of the most important decisions to which must face a student. Currently there are wide ranges of degrees and each of them has some advantages and disadvantages. Universities are experiencing increased concern for the quality of their services, for excellence in them and are aware of their social responsibility, to which can be added the economic factor.

This trend is affecting Europe today, in some countries more than others depending on the level of development, the number of existing universities and the type of management of the same in each case. They are also influencing this situation numerous private universities that are emerging in the last ten years.

Each student has different preferences or interests, depending on their personal characteristics, aspirations and experiences. It is possible to segment the students, this segmentation will be based on their experiences and expectations which are often different and therefore produce segments completely different.

Specifically this work is focused on the student from freshman year. This student will be the first segment and is the most inaccessible and interesting segment. Students must decide what to study and where. That is, first they choose the university. In recent years we have experienced a growing concern in the universities to attract the largest number of students and of course the highest quality. This work is focused to know which are the motives or reasons that lead students to select a particular career at the University, and the main factors influencing this choice. Also is necessary to know the role of parents or close friends which are the main influential factors in the election.

The author [1] presented a model of the influences affecting prospective student's choice of which college to attend. And they have also been other studies on the motivations of the choice of the university. The authors [3] [4] found that the most important point now is to study what the situation occupied by the student in a environment where institutions compete for the best students and student compete for the most demanding institutions.

The authors [2], [3], [4] [5] and [6] indicated that some students choose to study abroad. The main reason to study abroad is learning a new language, meet other cultures, or improve the curriculum. Secondly, it is at national level where the student choice about the University in which you wish to study is the main objective for example [9], [10] and [11]. Authors such as [12] [13] and [14] conducted the first studies on modelling the behaviour of students in the choice of the University. The third level that has received relatively little attention is the choice of courses of study; see for example [10].

On the other hand [8] gave a decision model for students, in which the choice was determined by two distinct factors: student characteristics and external influences. On student characteristics, the most important is the level of aspiration in education, followed by the student's development in their final years of study in higher education. Also it is a fact that within these student characteristics, we find that economic status determines their chosen career. On the other hand, if the economic status is high, expectations are usually high and aspirations of the students also tend to be high. In short, Chapman [1] stated that student attitudes are reflected in their behaviour.

Still, there are other aspects to be taken into account when analyzing student performance. Specially this paper is focused on the role of close friends and parents, and also are important the influences of teachers or tutors. Among the groups of most influence on the student we mention parents and friends because this influence is more direct.

For example in the study developed in [15] to ask the students who had been the most helpful person and also what had been more aid to solve doubts about choosing studies. The result demonstrating that their parents had influenced 43%, counsellors by 22 % and other students by 16%, also influenced their teachers and information offices by 19%.

In this case is easy to observe that parents play a critical role in decision making student. To learn about how parents affect to student choice, we found that common ways of influencing children are usually encouraging, the student makes the decision to imitate its parent, the high knowledge they have of the sector in which the parents work, they are all covered by the theories of socialization [16].

2 METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

Following [10] this study consider the two decisive factors influencing the choice of university degree: the most important factors are the tradition and vocation .

In this paper we have used the data available in the Study of Graduates of the University of Granada [7] it has made an aggregation. Determining a target population of 8,107 graduates. Contact with graduates. In all cases, contact by email, phone or by post was established to provide a login and a password so they could enter the application and respond to the questionnaire on the line. For that, were sent emails to all directions (91.6% of the population) remember repeated messages approximately every 7 days, not counting the numerous contacts to answer questions or issues raised. A graduate of the email address was unknown was available and your phone number (6.0% of the sample) was telephoned a minimum of five trials for each case. In the case of degrees with low response rates, graduates with who had not respond to the questionnaire after several emails from memory, preceded also call them by phone.

Fieldwork was conducted from June 24 to October 29, 2013 getting 3,515 responses.

Figure 1: Data from Graduate Study. University of Granada 2011

	Health Sciences	experimental sciences	Social and legal sciences	Technical sciences	Humanities
Tradition/ Family recommendation	9,26%	1,51%	6,06%	10,21%	4,91%
Vocational	67,93%	55,72%	55,12%	51,78%	67,32%
recommendation of others	7,60%	9,04%	8,86%	13,54%	6,39%
Ineligibility of other studies	8,08%	11,45%	5,20%	4,75%	1,47%
career opportunities	29,22%	19,28%	27,10%	56,53%	10,81%
expand and complete my knowledge	7,60%	21,99%	18,58%	11,40%	28,99%
other	4,04%	5,42%	4,80%	4,75%	6,88%

As we can see in the table above qualifications with higher vocation choice are the health sciences and humanities. Also they have high levels of choice by family tradition degrees in health science and technical education. We note that the degrees with the highest rate of students who were unable to access other is the Experimental Sciences. The areas with the highest rate of job opportunity presented are the social and legal sciences, health sciences and technical subjects. The humanities area is the highest rate reaches choice regarding reaching and complete knowledge of the student.

3 CONCLUSIONS

With these data we can conclude that the area of health sciences is chosen by vocation and its career opportunities. While the area of experimental sciences is chosen by more than half the cases because of vocational reasons, so does the area of social and legal sciences. Teaching techniques are chosen by professional outlets in more than half of their students and vocational reasons. Finally the humanities area has a high level of choice for vocations and complete knowledge reasons. This scenario we review data referred to 2011 and should be compared with current data on choice of degrees. The authors believe that these factors may vary depending on unemployment levels and cultural factors. It would also be interesting to know the segmentation by sex and by sex preferences. It also remains for future studies comparing the level of success and dropout rates, as among the constraints study found that this study only answered the students who completed the degree chosen.

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